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WEALD OF KENT HEALTH AREA

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1940


PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT

by

THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

A W GAYE, B.A., M.B., B.C., D.P.H. (Cantab).

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WEALD OF KENT HEALTH AREATo the Weald of Kent Health Committee.

Mr. Chairman and Members,

I have pleasure in presenting the first Annual Report for the Weald of Kent Health Area.

In the middle of the year, on the retirement of Dr. S. N. Galbraith owing to ill health, the South West Kent United Health Area was divided into two and the Weald of Kent Health Area formed to include the Borough of Tenterden and the Rural Districts of Cranbrook, Maidstone and Tenterden. The area has an acreage of 123,348 with over 12,000 houses and a population of 51,257, two thirds of which is living in the Cranbrook and Maidstone Rural districts. The Statutory Health Committee was formed of representatives from the four districts as follows:-

Chairman:

E. E. SELMES, Esq., J.P. - Tenterden Rural District.

Tenterden BoroughDr. T. Martin,  
Stanley Wilson, Esq.Maidstone Rural District.W. Day, Esq.,  
J. B. Leaver, Esq.,  
J. A. Raynham, Esq.Cranbrook Rural DistrictA. W. Burney, Esq.,  
Mrs. Clayton-Jones,  
Miss A. D. Hindle.Tenterden Rural District

C. H. Brown, Esq.

Clerk - P. G. Banfield, Esq., - with offices at  
5, East Hill, Tenterden.

Dr. A. W. GAYE was appointed Medical Officer of Health in July and took up duties on September 23rd. A gap of a few weeks occurred between Dr. Galbraith's giving up and the new Medical Officer taking over, but fortunately there was little infectious disease to be dealt with during that period.

Owing to War time exigencies, the Report is brief, giving the more essential statistical figures only, with commentaries reduced to a minimum. More extensive figures are available if needed.

I am, Sirs,

Yours obediently,

(Signed) A. W. GAYE.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

Yellowbois,  
Cranbrook.



STATISTICS

	Tenterden Borough	Cranbrook R.D.	Maidstone R.D.	Tenterden R.D.
<u>AREA.</u> (Acres)	8,946	41,315	34,708	38,379
<u>POPULATION.</u>				
(a) Resident (Census 1931)	3,472	12,927	15,317	6,315
(b) Resident (Mid-year 1940)	4,171	19,150	20,610	7,326
(c) Average appropriate to calculation of Death Rate.	3,337	19,533	20,404	6,300
<u>RATEABLE VALUE</u>	£23,635	£76,651	£88,365	£27,440
Sum represented by a ld. rate.	£94	£307.13.7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	£368	£113.5.8d.
<u>NUMBER OF INHABITED HOUSES</u> (end of 1940) according to Rate Book	1,100	4,096	5,000	2,039
<u>VITAL STATISTICS:-</u>				
<u>Live Births.</u> Legitimate.				
( Male	22	91	130	52
( Female	23	84	121	44
( Total	45	175	251	96
Illegitimate.				
Total	2	5	10	5
<u>Birth Rate</u> per 1,000 estimated resident popu- lation mid 1940	14.08	9.21	12.78	16.03
<u>Still Births.</u> Legitimate.				
Total.	2	2	10	2
Illegitimate.				
Total.	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
<u>Still Birth Rate</u> per 1,000 total (live & still) births.	38.46	16.30	35.23	18.34
<u>Deaths.</u>				
Male	34	92	130	52
Female	25	91	124	40
Total	59	183	254	92
<u>Death Rate</u> per 1,000 estimated average population	17.68	9.36	12.44	14.60
<u>Deaths from puerperal</u> <u>causes.</u>	nil	1	nil	nil
<u>Total Number of Infant</u> <u>Deaths was:-</u>	3	8	17	8
<u>Deaths -</u>				
From Cancer (all ages)Total	8	25	34	11
" Measles " " "	nil	nil	nil	nil
" Whooping Cough "	nil	1	nil	nil
" Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age) "	nil	1	1	nil

- continued -

The birth rate, compared with that for 1939 shows an increase in the two smaller and a decrease in the two more heavily populated districts. The death rate increased in Tenterden Borough, and fell in Cranbrook Rural District. The death rate of illegitimate infants (under 1 year of age) was considerably greater than that of legitimate, as is to be expected.

## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES.

### WATER SUPPLIES

Cranbrook Rural District. There was a temporary shortage at Sissinghurst, owing to influx of population.

Tenterden Rural District. Owing to the now abnormal number of consumers on the Wittersham and Stone Supply, a considerable strain was placed on the yield of the Springs.  
A 'link' main between the Wittersham Supply and Mid Kent Company Supply was negotiated to meet War time difficulties. (3,300 yards at a cost of £1,800)  
Samples from two private supplies were found badly contaminated, and both premises were connected to the mains (in one case only after Statutory Notice under Section 138 of the Public Health Act, 1936.)  
New drinking water supplies were made to eleven houses in the area during the year.

### DRAINAGE, SEWERAGE, and REFUSE DISPOSAL.

Cranbrook Rural District. Salvaging of tins etc. led to increase of rat nuisance.

Maidstone Rural District. Additions to sewage disposal works at Spot Farm, Bearsted were made. These consisted of two continuous flow horizontal silting tanks (total capacity 23,700 gallons), two percolating filters (760 cubic yards), two humus tanks (total capacity 6,330 gallons), and sludge beds (225 surface yards). Also 1,000 yards of 9" glazed ware piping were laid from Ashford Road through Lilk Meadows to the Disposal Works at Spot Farm.

Tenterden Rural District. Military billeting adversely affected cesspools and drainage at some houses. Scavenging was arranged to Military latrines in some parishes.

### HOUSING.

Tenterden Borough. Inspection under Housing Acts temporarily suspended. Housing conditions in general satisfactory.

Cranbrook Rural District. Owing to influx of population, there are many cases of overcrowding.

Maidstone Rural District. There appears no shortage of houses. There have been no cases of serious overcrowding.

### MILK SUPPLIES.

Owing to pressure of War time work - Evacuation, A.R.P., and Firefighting - the Sanitary

- continued -



MILK SUPPLIES - continued. Inspectors found it difficult to carry out as much supervision of milk producing farms as usual. In the Tenterden Rural District, a third of the samples of 'designated' milk taken were reported unsatisfactory.

### SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

Cranbrook Rural District. All slaughtering is carried out at the Ministry of Health slaughterhouse, Cranbrook.

Maidstone Rural District. Of 18 applications for registration received, 5 were refused. These 5, on appeal to the Magistrates, were adjourned indefinitely. None of these slaughterhouses has been used during the year. The distribution of meat from the Government slaughterhouses to the local district butchers has been unsatisfactory, both as regards the manner of distribution and condition of the meat on arrival at the butcher's premises.

### NURSING HOMES.

	Number Registered.	Maternity	<u>Beds.</u> Other.
Tenterden Borough	1	12	28
Cranbrook R.D.	5	12	41
Maidstone R.D.	2	7	27
<u>Total</u>	8	31	96

These were visited by the former Medical Officer of Health.  
There are no Nursing Homes in the Tenterden Rural district.

### INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

Notifications:-	Tenterden Borough	Cranbrook R.D.	Maidstone R.D.	Tenterden R.D.	Totals
Diphtheria	1	9	13	2	25
Scarlet Fever	3	9	18	11	41
Pneumonia	-	20	10	5	35
Cerebro-spinal fever	-	1	2	3	6
Encephalitis lethargica	-	-	1	-	1
Erysipelas	-	4	2	-	6
Puerperal pyrexia	-	3	1	-	4
Measles	1	15	1	11	28
Whooping Cough	-	14	9	1	24
	5	75	57	33	170

# INFECTIOUS DISEASE (continued)

There were also 3 cases of cerebro-spinal fever and one of measles notified among non-civilians.

Tenterden Borough remained remarkably free from infectious disease during the year.

All the cases of diphtheria and cerebro-spinal fever and the majority of scarlet fever were admitted to hospital.

1 diphtheria (Tenterden Rural) and 3 pneumonia cases (2 Cranbrook Rural and 1 Tenterden Rural) died.

A fatal case of anthrax in a man aged 29 was reported in the Maidstone Rural area. He was a farm worker who had been engaged in spreading Indian bone meal. This meal on examination at the County Laboratory, was found to be infected with *Bacillus Anthracis*. Two other farms were infected and two animals died. All the remaining bone meal was destroyed, but unfortunately a considerable amount had already been spread on the land.

A small outbreak of diphtheria occurred in the parish of Marden (Maidstone R.D.). Four cases were notified - all in children - and admitted to Hospital. All contacts in their homes were swabbed, and by means of arrangements made through the courtesy of the County Pathological laboratory, all the 300 odd children in the local school also had swabs taken. Three children among these were found to have positive swabs and were removed to the Isolation Hospital. No further cases occurred.

There is no hospital provision in the area for other infectious diseases than diphtheria and scarlet fever, and no means of effectively isolating contacts among hop-pickers. Very little infectious disease, however, was reported in the hop-picking season.

## Tuberculosis.

		NEW CASES				DEATHS			
		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Tenterden Borough		1	1	-	1	1	1	-	-
Cranbrook Rural		3	2	2	-	1	3	-	-
Maidstone Rural		10	3	3	-	1	1	-	-
Tenterden Rural		1	1	-	1	1	-	-	1
Total		15	7	5	2	4	5	-	1

All the pulmonary cases were 25 years of age or more, 18 of them 35 or over. The non-pulmonary cases were aged from 15 to 34. The non-pulmonary death was due to tuberculosis of the spine.

3 cases of pulmonary and 1 non-pulmonary were reported as recovered.



EVACUATION

Hop-pickers in the area stayed on after picking had ended, as they did not wish to return to London owing to 'blitz' conditions. Special arrangements were made for their travelling to and being billeted in other areas.

CIVIL DEFENCE.

For A.R.P. purposes the area is divided into two, with Headquarters at Tenterden and Maidstone. Both are well organised.

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## INSPECTIONS BY SANITARY INSPECTORS

	Tenterden Borough			Cranbrook R.D.			Maidstone R.D.			Tenterden R.D.		
	Numbers	Visits	Defects	Numbers	Visits	Defects	Numbers	Visits	Defects	Numbers	Visits	Defects
Bakehouses	3	12	-	14	23	1	14	14	-	9	6	-
Dairies	-	-	-	123	329	9	107	124	6	111	80	6
Slaughterhouses - Registered	2	61	-	-	-	-	5)	41	11	-	-	-
Licenced	-	-	-	12	316	6	13)	-	-	6	-	-
{ Other Food	2	10	-	37	23	1	23	26	4	-	-	-
{ Preparing Places	-	-	-	68	52	3	102	44	6	1	8	-
Factories	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	8	-
Workshops	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Nuisances and Defects remedied (other than above)

## Numbers

	Tenterden Borough	Cranbrook R.D.	Maidstone R.D.	Tenterden R.D.
Overcrowding	1	2	-	-
Keeping of Animals	1	1	2	-
Hop-pickers camp	4	5	32	-
Sanitary Accommodation - insufficient	-	-	14	3
- defective	6	15	8	-
Drainage - Reconstructed	-	11	32	4
Repaired	14	4	44	-
Cleansed	-	88	70	4
Cesspools - Abolished	1	1	12	4
Repaired	-	23	10	-
Offensive Accumulations	2	-	7	-
Refuse Receptacles	-	29	16	3
Tents, Vans and Sheds	-	3	6	-
Yard Paving	-	3	14	-
Dampness	2	7	20	-
Roofs and Rainwater Pipes	-	11	24	-
Floors	1	8	12	-
Walls and Ceilings	-	11	12	-
Windows and Ventilation	-	5	16	-
Baths, Lavatory Basins and Sinks	-	12	28	-
Water Supplies	1	12	12	3
Miscellaneous	12	26	10	-

FOOD CONDEMNED DURING THE YEAR

Tenterden Borough.	Cranbrook R.D. .	Maidstone R.D.	Tenterden R.D.
1 cwt, 1 qt.	5 tons 14 cwt, 2 qt, 25 lbs.	11 cwt, 1 qt, 13 lbs.	3 qt.

TOTAL VISITS BY SANITARY INSPECTORS

212	2,719	1,836	477
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These tables give only a partial idea of the work carried out by the six Sanitary Inspectors. They have all been engaged in work in connection with Civil Defence, which made considerable in-roads upon the time available for their normal Sanitary duties.

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